

the Ten Commandments broke, perhaps, the mountain silences of Sinai. Thus the upgathered worship of the ages reverberates in the service for those who listen deeply. What wonder that the Episcopalian loves his Book of Common Prayer!

But there is another side. Judging by the frequent failure of the reader, it is not easy to render the stately service statily. The hand-gallop of the ordinary clergyman pressing without pausing along its highways and its byways, seems by no means reverential to a listener not engaged in keeping up with him. Can the priest under such strain to reach his finish in due time, be really *thinking* as he prays? And so quaintly distant from the natural believing of to-day are some of the ideas and phrases, so graphic is the thought of God, of Christ, of Scripture, and of man's relation to all three, that a wonder rises. Does the priest quite *dare* to think as he reads on? Do these fine-faced, thoughtful, modern minded men feel no sense of unreality in what they are repeating? Even with high conscience they can answer, "None," there still remain the dangers that always cling, like shadow to its substance, to a crystallized, established ritual,—the risks of cherishing the form and show above the spirit of worship, of valuing the father's faith above the freshening truth, of holding uniformity as a more sacred thing than freedom; the risks of ecclesiastic immobility which makes the slightest change from wonted words and customs almost impossible without a church convulsion. Along with all this goes the danger of superciliousness in religion, that bigotry of daintiness, so frequent with Episcopalians, which corresponds to controversial bigotry in bodies of a coarser grain and a more earnest nature. The history of all Churches with old liturgies shows how real and great and unescapable these dangers are.

Not that Churches without liturgies entirely escape them. Simplest forms

of worship can be held as rigid as the richest, and a creed alone may crystallize religion more solidly than any forms of worship can. But certainly freedom and simplicity in worship tend to *lessen* all these risks, tend to make for freshness and sincerity. As a means of sharing *closest realities* of prayer, there can hardly be comparison between the liturgy and the free worship, so greatly has the latter the advantage. And even if less congregational, the latter is apt to be, and to be felt as more truly democratic; for ritual is in its essence aristocratic, and in some degree its subtle charm is due to its making the partaker one of the elect. As for grace and dignity, which are for chastened tastes imperilled by all voluntaries, at least it may be said that the freer type of worship has more of that grace that comes and goes with plastic elements. If it do not so often give the feeling of cathedral aisles, it oftener gives the sense of green fields and winds and morning in the sky. If in evanescent touches only, yet in such touches it exceeds in beauty and impressiveness almost any reach of liturgy.

—[W. C. G. in Unity.

A MARRIAGE LETTER.

Printed by Request.

DEAR COUSIN,—Herewith you will receive a present of a pair of woollen stockings, knit by my own hands, and be assured, dear coz., that my friendship for you is as warm as the material, active as the finger work, and generous as the donation. But I consider this present as peculiarly appropriate on the occasion of your marriage. You will remark, in the first place, that there are two individuals united in one pair, who are to walk side by side, guarding against coldness, and giving comfort as long as they last. The thread of their texture is mixed; and so, alas! is the thread of life. In these, however, the white predominates, expressing, by desire and confidence, that thus it will be